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STOVER

Staff Code of Conduct

Independent Day and Boarding School for Girls & Boys aged 3 to 18 years

Stover School

July 2008

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This policy applies to all pupils whilst in the care of Stover School to include provision before and after school, trips and activities.

To be read in conjunction with the following:

- Positive Handling Policy
- Behaviour Policies
- Anti-corruption Policy
- ICT Safe Users Policy
- Taking, Storing & Using Images of Children

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

Introduction

The purpose of the code is to:

- Confirm and reinforce the professional responsibilities of staff (both teaching and non teaching)
- Clarify the legal position in relation to sensitive aspects of staff/pupil relationships
- Set out the expectations of standards to be maintained within the school

Unacceptable Conduct

Staff may be found guilty of unacceptable professional conduct:

- Where they seriously demean or undermine pupils, parents, carers or colleagues, or act towards them in a manner which is discriminatory in relation to gender, marital status, religion, belief, colour, race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, disability or age.
- Where they fail to take reasonable care of pupils under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.
- Where they fail to comply with relevant statutory provisions which support the well-being and development of pupils, including where these require co-operation and collaboration with a range of agencies, as well as teacher colleagues and other adults.
- Where they fail to observe confidentiality in a manner consistent with legal requirements.
- Where they fail to comply with the requirements of statutory bodies relating to the examination, assessment and evaluation of pupil achievement and attainment.
- Where they fail to maintain appropriate standards of honesty and integrity in management and administrative duties, including in the use of school property and finance.
- Where they misuse or misrepresent their professional position, qualifications or experience.
- Where they otherwise bring the reputation and standing of the school, or the profession of teaching, into serious disrepute.

Serious Incompetence

Staff may be found guilty of serious incompetence:

- Where they demonstrate a level of competence which falls seriously short of that expected, including failures relating to management and leadership roles.

Conviction of a relevant Criminal Offence

Staff may be subject to disciplinary action:

Where they have been convicted of a relevant criminal offence or have accepted a caution in relation to such an offence.

Staff/pupil contact

Staff should avoid unnecessary contact with pupils outside school

- Under no circumstances should a member of staff visit a child in their home outside agreed work arrangements or invite a child to their own home or that of a family member, colleague or friend. If in an emergency, such an arrangement is required, the member of staff must have permission from a senior member of staff and the parents and have clear justification for the arrangement. This will be recorded.
- They should not give pupils their home address, home phone number, mobile phone number or email address unless it is for the purpose of safety on a school trip or for the delivery of work in Years 10 – 13. School email addresses should be used for this purpose whenever possible. Staff should not correspond with pupils via social networking sites e.g. Facebook
- They should not make arrangements to meet pupils, individually or in groups, outside school other than on school trips authorised by the Deputy Principal
- They should avoid contacting pupils at home unless this is strictly necessary, a record of the conversation should be made and copy put on the pupil's file
- They should not give a pupil a lift in their own vehicle unless they are the school nurse or a Houseparent who is taking a pupil for medical treatment. Members of staff who are also parents of pupils at Stover School may transport their own children in their own vehicle but they should not transport any other pupils.
- Staff should avoid social networking contact with ex pupils

Language

Staff should not swear, blaspheme or use any sort of offensive language in front of pupils. Staff should not make sexual innuendos or any comments of a sexual nature (other than in the context of the curriculum).

Gifts, Rewards and Favouritism

Staff should avoid displays of affection either personally or in writing e.g. messages in birthday cards, gifts, text messages, emails etc. Staff should avoid words or actions which are over familiar.

Any gifts given to pupils by staff should be given openly and not be based on favouritism. Gifts may be given to a group or class of pupils as a reward. The reason for the reward must be specific and relate to a school based activity.

If a member of staff wishes to give a personal gift to a pupil, they must discuss the giving of the gift and the reason for it with a senior member of staff. This action will be recorded.

Staff should take care to ensure that they do not accept a gift that may be construed as a bribe by others, or lead to the giver getting preferential treatment. There are occasions when pupils and/or parents wish to give staff tokens of their appreciation and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.

Staff should exercise care when selecting children for specific activities or privileges to avoid perceptions of favouritism or unfairness. Methods and criteria for selection should be transparent and subject to scrutiny.

Physical contact

1. Reasonable restraint

By law, teaching staff, and other staff who are authorised by the Principal to have control or charge of pupils, may use such restraint or physical contact as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do any of the following:

- Committing a criminal offence
- Injuring themselves or others
- Causing damage to property, including their own
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs in the classroom or elsewhere.

This applies when a teacher, or otherwise authorised person, is on school premises and when he or she is in control or charge of the pupil elsewhere, for example on a field trip or other authorised out of school activity. It only applies where no other form of control is available and where it is necessary to intervene.

Before intervening physically a teacher should, wherever practicable, tell the pupils to stop and what will happen if they do not. The member of staff should continue attempting to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident and should make it clear that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary. Staff should always avoid touching or holding a pupil in a way that might be considered indecent. Nor should they act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury. The member of staff involved should inform the Deputy Principal, Head of the Preparatory School or Principal immediately following an incident. This is to help prevent any misunderstanding or misrepresentation of the incident, and it will be helpful in the event of a complaint. The member of staff should provide a written report within 24 hours. A copy of the report will be kept on the pupil and member of staff's file.

2. Action taken in self-defence or in an emergency

The law allows anyone to defend themselves against an attack provided they do not use more force than is necessary. Similarly, where a pupil is at risk of immediate injury or on the point of inflicting injury on someone else, any member of staff (whether authorised or not) would be entitled to intervene

3. Contact in other situations

The law does not cover some other occasions when some physical contact may be proper or necessary. Some physical contact may, for example, be necessary to demonstrate exercises or techniques during Music, Drama, Media Studies, PE lessons or sports coaching, or if a member of staff has to give first aid. In such circumstances the member of staff should first explain the intended action to the pupil. Do not proceed with the action if the pupil appears to be apprehensive or reluctant or if you have other concerns about the pupil's likely reaction. If at all possible ensure that the door is open and if you are in doubt, ask a colleague or another pupil to be present during the demonstration

Touching may also be appropriate where a pupil is in distress and needs comforting. Staff should use their own professional judgement when they feel a pupil is in need of this kind of support.

Note: there is no legal definition of 'reasonable restraint'. It will depend upon the circumstances.

- Physical restraint could not be justified to prevent a pupil from committing a trivial misdemeanour
- Any restraint used should always be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result
- Whether it is reasonable to use restraint and the degree of restraint that could be reasonably employed might also depend upon the age, understanding and sex of the pupil.

Isolation

During the school day (8am – 5.30pm) wherever possible, staff should avoid being alone in a room with a pupil. Where, for reasons of timetabling, confidentiality or other circumstances this is not practicable, staff should ensure that the door to the room has a glass panel or is left open. Where timetabling requires staff to be in a room without a glass panel and the door cannot be left open, an additional member of staff will be allocated.

Outside of the school day (5.30pm – 8am) unless in boarding, staff should not be alone in a room with a pupil. If there is a reason then the SLT member of staff on duty should be informed.

Lone Working

If a member of staff wishes to work after 9.00pm, the normal school closure time when there is no function, they must arrange to do so in advance with the resident Security & Maintenance Supervisor or his deputy, who will lock the rest of the school, having made sure that the individual is fully aware of how to lock the final door and set the alarm.

After hours, the school caretaker monitors access to the grounds via the main drive and back gate via CCTV. He makes regular patrols and ensures that all buildings are secured at night.

Relationships

It is inappropriate for a member of staff to have a sexual or intimate relationship with a pupil of any age and it may be a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 even if the pupil is aged 16 or 17.

Photographs

Staff should seek permission from the Deputy Principal or the Head of the Preparatory School before taking photographs or video camera footage of any pupils in class, at any school events or on a school trip. They should also seek permission before displaying these photographs. Photographs and videos may only be taken using school equipment. Personal cameras, video recorders and mobile phones should not be used.

Access to Inappropriate Images and Internet Usage

Staff should not use equipment belonging to the school to access adult pornography; neither should personal equipment containing these images or links to them be brought into the work place.

Dress and Appearance

A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self expression. However, staff should dress in a professional way which is appropriate to their role. Staff should ensure that their appearance is smart and not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative. Male members of staff are required to wear a collar and tie and female members of staff are required to be smartly dressed.

Confidentiality

Staff should respect the privacy of pupils, parents and colleagues and should not pass information about, for example, addresses or telephone numbers to others without checking first with the person concerned.

Lists of pupils' /parents' names and addresses must not be used for any purpose without the consent of the Principal. Information about pupils, parents or colleagues should never be disclosed to telephone enquirers.

Note: Do not give an undertaking of confidentiality to a pupil where child protection or other potential issues of criminal activity are involved (see child protection policy) and seek advice from a senior member of staff.